

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 085

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1104

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CZ

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO U.S. JAROMIR JOHANES

1. WE HAVE HAD SOME SMALL OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL BUSINESS
CONTACT WITH AMBASSADOR JOHANES AND FIND THE BACKGROUND PREPARED
ON HIM BY BI ACCURATE AND WELL DONE. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH AS AN
ADDENDUM, HERE ARE OUR IMPRESSIONS OF HIM.

2. JOHANES IS SMOOTH, SELF-CONFIDENT, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, ARTICULATE,

AND POSSESSED OF A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR. HE FEELS A CERTAIN LACK
OF DEPTH IN HIS KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. AFFAIRS, AND IT WILL TAKE HIM SOME
TIME TO GET OVER THIS, PARTICULARLY SINCE HIS PREDECESSOR IS NOW
HIS SUPERIOR IN THE MFA, SPACIL. HIS CLOSENESS TO FOREIGN
MINISTER CHNOUPEK SEEMS TO GIVE HIM A FEELING OF SELF-CONFIDENCE,
HOWEVER, AND WE SUSPECT HE WILL MOVE RATHER QUICKLY TO ESTABLISH
HIS AUTHORITY IN U.S. - CSSR AFFAIRS.

3. RELATIONS BETWEEN HIM AND SPACIL APPEAR TO BE EXCELLENT, AND
THEY ARE CLEARLY GOOD PERSONAL FRIENDS WITH A HEALTHY JOSHING
RELATIONSHIP. (E.G. DURING SENDOFF LUNCH APRIL 21 JOHANES AND
CHARGE MADE A GOOD MANY JOKES ABOUT HOW SPACIL DID NOT BELIEVE
ANYONE ELSE COULD FILL HIS SHOES; WHEN SUBJECT OF SPACIL'S
FORTHCOMING VISIT TO U.S. CAME UP, JOHANES EXPRESSED MOCK DREAD
AT HAVING SPACIL COME AROUND TELLING EVERYBODY HOW WELL HE HAD
DONE THINGS IN COMPARISON WITH WHAT JOHANES WAS DOING.) IN
GENERAL, JOHANES HAS A TWINKLE IN HIS EYE AND IS ABLE TO JOKE IN
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A HEALTHY WAY ABOUT ANY SUBJECT, INCLUDING TOUCHY ONES LIKE
USSR-CSSR RELATIONS.

4. AS REGARDS HIS FAMILY, MRS. JOHANES IS COMPARATIVELY YOUNG, AND CLEARLY DOES NOT LOOK FORWARD TO TACKLING ANOTHER WHOLE NEW COUNTRY SO SOON AFTER GOING TO CANADA FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHILE HER ENGLISH IS GOOD (AS IS HIS) AND SHE IS ATTRACTIVE WITH A PLEASANT PERSONALITY, SHE DOES SEEM TO FEEL THAT SHE IS BEING ASKED TO GO THROUGH AN ORDEAL, AND BOTH SHE AND JOHANES JOKE A GOOD DEAL ABOUT HER NOT BEING READY TO GO YET. JOHANES ALSO EXPRESSED WHAT SEEMED TO BE GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT THE SAFETY OF HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN IN VIEW OF RECENT INCIDENTS IN WASHINGTON (SEPTTEL); IT IS CLEAR HE IS A BIT UPTIGHT ABOUT WASHINGTON AS A CITY TO LIVE IN. HE ALSO EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN (DURING APRIL 21 LUNCH) ABOUT WHAT KIND OF PROTOCOL TREATMENT HE WOULD GET, BUT SPACIL DID TELL HIM THAT ONE OF THE JOYS OF SERVING IN U.S. WAS THAT AMERICANS WERE NOT PROTOCOL-CONSCIOUS.

5. IN GENERAL, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT JOHANES IS SOMEWHAT IN-EXPERIENCED, BUT EXTREMELY BRIGHT AND INTENT UPON DOING A GOOD JOB; AND HE IS PROBABLY CAPABLE OF DOING IT.
PERRY

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